

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the present application.

Listing of Claims:

1-40. (cancelled)

41. (currently amended) An interactive television program guide system in which program guide data is provided and wherein the program guide data includes unique identifiers associated with television programs, the system comprising:

a continuous data stream processor configured to select a particular unique identifier associated with a particular television program for inclusion in a continuous data stream, wherein the particular television program belongs to a program grouping;

distribution equipment configured to distribute the particular unique identifier to user television equipment in the continuous data stream only when the particular television program is currently being broadcasted; and

an interactive television program guide implemented on the user television equipment configured to:

monitor the continuous data stream for the presence of the particular unique identifier, wherein the presence of the particular unique identifier indicates when the particular television program is being currently broadcasted;

perform a real-time action associated with the particular television program when the particular unique identifier is detected in the continuous data stream; and

perform an action associated with at least one other television program belonging to the program grouping when the particular unique identifier is detected in the continuous data stream.

42. (previously presented) The system defined in claim 41 wherein:
the real-time action comprises displaying a program reminder for the particular television program.

43. (previously presented) The system defined in claim 41 wherein:

the real-time action comprises displaying a program reminder for the particular television program; and

the interactive television program guide is configured to prefetch current program guide data from the continuous data stream when the reminder is displayed by the program guide.

44. (previously presented) The system defined in claim 41 wherein:
the real-time action comprises authorizing the viewing of the particular television program, wherein the program is a pay-per-view program.

45. (previously presented) The system defined in claim 41 wherein:
the real-time action comprises authorizing a viewing of the particular television program, wherein the program is a pay-per-view-program; and
the interactive television program guide is configured to prefetch current program guide data from the continuous data stream when the viewing of the pay-per-view program is authorized by the program guide.

46. (previously presented) The system defined in claim 41 wherein:
the real-time action comprises recording the particular television program.

47. (previously presented) The system defined in claim 41 wherein:
the real-time action comprises locking the particular television program and prompting a user for a control code.

48. (previously presented) The system defined in claim 41 wherein:
one or more of the unique identifiers is a program grouping identifier; and
the real-time action comprises displaying a program reminder for the particular television program.

49. (previously presented) The system defined in claim 41 wherein:
one or more of the unique identifiers is a program grouping identifier;

the real-time action comprises displaying a program reminder for the particular television program; and

the interactive television program guide is configured to prefetch current program guide data from the continuous data stream when the reminder is displayed by the program guide.

50. (previously presented) The system defined in claim 41 wherein:
one or more of the unique identifiers is a program grouping identifier; and
the real-time action comprises authorizing the viewing of the particular television program, wherein the program is a pay-per-view program.

51. (previously presented) The system defined in claim 41 wherein:
one or more of the unique identifiers is a program grouping identifier;
the real-time action comprises authorizing a viewing of the particular television program, wherein the program is a pay-per-view-program; and
the interactive television program guide is configured to prefetch current program guide data from the continuous data stream when the viewing of the pay-per-view program is authorized by the program guide.

52. (previously presented) The system defined in claim 41 wherein:
one or more of the unique identifiers is a program grouping identifier; and
the real-time action comprises recording the particular television program.

53. (previously presented) The system defined in claim 41 wherein:
one or more of the unique identifiers is a program grouping identifier; and
the real-time action comprises locking the particular television program and prompting a user for a control code.

54-95. (canceled)

96. (currently amended) An interactive television program guide system in which program guide data is provided to an interactive television program guide implemented on

user television equipment and wherein the program guide data includes unique identifiers associated with television programs, the system comprising:

means for selecting a particular unique identifier associated with a particular television program for inclusion in a continuous data stream, wherein the particular television program belongs to a program grouping;

means for distributing the particular unique identifier to the user television equipment in the continuous data stream only when the particular television program is being currently broadcasted;

means for monitoring the continuous data stream for the presence of the particular unique identifier, wherein the presence of the particular unique identifier indicates when the particular television program is being currently broadcasted;

means for performing a real-time action associated with the particular television program when the particular unique identifier is detected in the continuous data stream; and

means for performing an action associated with at least one other television program belonging to the program grouping when the particular unique identifier is detected in the continuous data stream.

97. (previously presented) The system defined in claim 96 wherein:
the means for performing a real-time action comprises means for displaying the program reminder for the particular television program.

98. (previously presented) The system defined in claim 96 wherein:
the means for performing a real-time action comprises means for displaying a program reminder for the particular television program and prefetching current program guide data from the continuous data stream when the reminder is displayed.

99. (previously presented) The system defined in claim 96 wherein:
the means for performing a real-time action comprises means for authorizing the viewing of the particular television program, wherein the program is a pay-per-view program.

100. (previously presented) The system defined in claim 96 wherein:

the means for performing a real-time action comprises means for authorizing a viewing of the particular television program, wherein the program is a pay-per-view program, and means for prefetching current program guide data from the continuous data stream when the viewing of the pay-per-view program is authorized.

101. (previously presented) The system defined in claim 96 wherein:
the means for performing a real-time action comprises means for recording the particular television program.
102. (previously presented) The system defined in claim 96 wherein:
the means for performing a real-time action comprises means for locking the particular television program and prompting the user for a control code.
103. (previously presented) The system defined in claim 96 wherein:
one or more of the unique identifiers is a program grouping identifier; and
the means for performing a real-time action comprises means for displaying a program reminder for the particular television program.
104. (previously presented) The system defined in claim 96 wherein:
one or more of the unique identifiers is a program grouping identifier; and
the means for performing a real-time action comprises means for displaying a program reminder for the particular television program, and means for prefetching current program guide data from the continuous data stream when the reminder is displayed.
105. (previously presented) The system defined in claim 96 wherein:
one or more of the unique identifiers is a program grouping identifier; and
the means for performing a real-time action comprises means for authorizing a viewing of the particular television program, wherein the program is a pay-per-view program.
106. (previously presented) The system defined in claim 96 wherein:
one or more of the unique identifiers is a program grouping identifier; and

the means for performing a real-time action comprises means for authorizing a viewing of the particular television program, wherein the program is a pay-per-view program, and means for prefetching current program guide data from the continuous data stream when the viewing of the pay-per-view program is authorized.

107. (previously presented) The system defined in claim 96 wherein:
one or more of the unique identifiers is a program grouping identifier; and
the means for performing a real-time action comprises means for recording the particular television program.

108. (previously presented) The system defined in claim 96 wherein:
one or more of the unique identifiers is a program grouping identifier; and
the means for performing a real-time action comprises means for locking the particular television program and prompting the user for a control code.

109-151. (canceled)

152. (currently amended) A method in an interactive television program guide system in which program guide data is provided to an interactive television program guide implemented on user television equipment and wherein the program guide data includes unique identifiers associated with television programs, the method comprising:
selecting a particular unique identifier associated with a particular television program for inclusion in a continuous data stream, wherein the particular television program belongs to a program grouping;
distributing the particular unique identifier to the user television equipment in the continuous data stream only when the particular television program is being currently broadcasted;
monitoring the continuous data stream for the presence of the particular unique identifier, wherein the presence of the particular unique identifier indicates when the particular television program is being currently broadcasted;
performing a real-time action associated with the particular television program when the particular unique identifier is detected in the continuous data stream; and

performing an action associated with at least one other television program belonging to the program grouping when the particular unique identifier is detected in the continuous data stream.

153. (previously presented) The method defined in claim 152 wherein:
the real-time action comprises displaying a program reminder for the particular television program.

154. (previously presented) The method defined in claim 152 wherein:
the real-time action comprises displaying a program reminder for the particular television program; and
the method further comprises using the interactive television program guide to prefetch current program guide data from the continuous data stream when the reminder is displayed by the program guide.

155. (previously presented) The method defined in claim 152 wherein:
the real-time action comprises authorizing the viewing of the particular television program, wherein the program is a pay-per-view program.

156. (previously presented) The method defined in claim 152 wherein:
the real-time action comprises authorizing a viewing of the particular television program, wherein the program is a pay-per-view-program; and
the method further comprises using the interactive television program guide to prefetch current program guide data from the continuous data stream when the viewing of the pay-per-view program is authorized by the program guide.

157. (previously presented) The method defined in claim 152 wherein:
the real-time action comprises recording the particular television program.

158. (previously presented) The method defined in claim 152 wherein:
the real-time action comprises locking the particular television program and prompting a user for a control code.

159. (previously presented) The method defined in claim 152 wherein:
one or more of the unique identifiers is a program grouping identifier; and
the real-time action comprises displaying a program reminder for the
particular television program.
160. (previously presented) The method defined in claim 152 wherein:
one or more of the unique identifiers is a program grouping identifier;
the real-time action comprises displaying a program reminder for the
particular television program; and
the method further comprises using the interactive television program guide
to prefetch current program guide data from the continuous data stream when the reminder is
displayed by the program guide.
161. (previously presented) The method defined in claim 152 wherein:
one or more of the unique identifiers is a program grouping identifier; and
the real-time action comprises authorizing the viewing of the particular
television program, wherein the program is a pay-per-view program.
162. (previously presented) The method defined in claim 152 wherein:
one or more of the unique identifiers is a program grouping identifier;
the real-time action comprises authorizing a viewing of the particular
television program, wherein the program is a pay-per-view-program; and
the method further comprises using the interactive television program guide
to prefetch current program guide data from the continuous data stream when the viewing of the
pay-per-view program is authorized by the program guide.
163. (previously presented) The method defined in claim 152 wherein:
one or more of the unique identifiers is a program grouping identifier;
the real-time action comprises recording the particular television program.
164. (previously presented) The method defined in claim 152 wherein:

one or more of the unique identifiers is a program grouping identifier; and
the real-time action comprises locking the particular television program and
prompting a user for a control code.

165-167. (canceled)